

MONTANA  
Department of Public Health  
and Human Services

Section:  
REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
PROGRAMS

Subject:  
Refugee Employment and Training

**Supersedes:**            **New to the manual**

**References:**            45 CFR 400.60; .65-.77; .81-.83; ARM 37.74.101, .102

**GENERAL RULE**--Refugees must accept and maintain employment to their best ability and seek employment upgrades as appropriate. All refugees are referred to the same local employment services and community resources that any citizen would have available to them. This includes but is not limited to the local job service office, adult learning center, literacy council, vocational rehabilitation and job clubs.

Women must have the same opportunity as men to participate in all funded services including employment services. Activity by gender is monitored through the service tracking spread sheet.

To the maximum extent possible, refugee-specific services will be provided by bicultural, bilingual men and women.

**Refugee Employment and Training-** (RET) is funded by RSS (Refugee Social Service) funds and is open to eligible refugees/asylees regardless of employability status. In Montana RET services are provided through the same contractors utilized for TANF E & T (WoRC) and SNAP E & T (FSET). This allows for continuity of services.

Only employable recipients of **RCA** (Refugee Cash Assistance) are required to participate in the RET program. (See TANF/REF 1001-1)

## **RET ELIGIBILITY**

Individuals meeting the following are eligible for RET services regardless of income and resource levels for the household:

1. Age 16 or older,
2. Ineligible for TANF for any reason other than non-compliance,
3. Refugee who entered the US within the last 60 months, OR
4. Asylee granted asylum by the US within the last 60 months.

This would include refugees not open to any public assistance program or those open to RMA, Medicaid, SNAP or receiving a child only TANF grant in limited situations. **There is not a requirement to have children in the home.**

Section: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
PROGRAMS

Subject: Refugee Employment and Training

**Examples of RET eligible households:**

- Single adult asylee granted asylum 9 months ago who is receiving SNAP with or without a SNAP E & T provider.
- Refugee couple with a child, zero income and over resource for TANF or MA who entered the county 12 months ago.
- Childless refugee couple who entered the country last month. Male's income exceeds FS limit. Resources exceed RCA limit. Female wants help finding a job. Both can be served by RET.
- Grandma qualifies as a refugee in the country less than 60 months and only wants TANF for a grandchild.

**CASE NOTES**

It is important RET providers enter case notes on TEAMS or CHIMES even when all public assistance involvements are closed. RCA participants must have weekly progress notes entered. Contact for non-RCA participants will be dependent on their employability plan and need for services. Some may only have RET contact three times a year to confirm employment status and ensure additional services are not needed to support self-sufficiency.

**TIME LIMIT**

Providing that funds continue to be available (see "priority" sub heading in TANF/REF 1004-1) RET services are available for the full 60 months regardless of the current self-sufficiency status of the refugee/asylee. Individuals should be encouraged to continue participate in RET activities to maintain current employment while they seek employment upgrades.

**EMPLOYABILITY  
PLAN**

Each RET participant, regardless of employability status or receipt of any type of public assistance, must have an individual employability plan (EP) (HCS-810 - RET Employability Plan) outlining a monthly schedule of services and consequences for non-compliance. The plan should list 25 hours per week of activities and be shared with the RCM (Refugee Case Management) provider as part of the self-sufficiency plan. Refugees not receiving RCA may negotiate three months of EPs at one time. A copy of the initial plan and trimester updates must be sent to the State Refugee Coordinator.

The employability plan must:

1. Be designed to lead to the earliest possible employment and not be structured in such a way as to discourage or delay employment or job-seeking;
2. Contain a definite employment goal, attainable in the shortest time period consistent with the employability of the refugee in relation to job openings in the area; and
3. Have the refugee's signature and include detailed activities to be completed.

Section: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
PROGRAMS

Subject: Refugee Employment and Training

**REQUIRED  
FORMS**

An Employability Plan (Form HCS-810) is required for all RET participants. Refugees receiving RCA (Refugee Cash Assistance). RET will also be required to have the following forms in their file in the RET office. These forms are utilized in the TANF E and T (WoRC) Program and therefore must be used in the RCA E & T (RET) program even when there are not children in the home. Those not receiving RCA have an option to utilize the TANF forms listed below.

- **HCS-731 Barrier Reduction Screening Guide**
- **HCS-750A Assessment Record**
- **HCS-326 Domestic Violence Screening Questionnaire**
- **HCS-732 Learning Needs Screening Tool**

**ALLOWABLE  
ACTIVITIES**

Activities for the EP can include the following:

1. World-of-work and job orientation, job clubs, job workshops, job development, referral to job opportunities, job search, and job placement and follow-up.
2. Employability assessment services, including aptitude and skills testing.
3. On-the job training, when such training is provided at the employment site and is expected to result in fulltime, permanent, unsubsidized employment with the employer who is providing the training.
4. English language instruction, with an emphasis on English as it relates to obtaining and retaining a job.

**NOTE:** Education and English language training must be concurrent with job search and placement for RCA recipients.

5. Vocational training, including driver education and training when provided as part of an individual employability plan.
6. Skills recertification in order to practice his or her profession in the United States.

**NOTE:** Training can consist of full-time attendance in a college or professional training program, provided that such training is appropriate and is included in the individuals EP/self-sufficiency plan and does not exceed one year in duration. After one year the refugee is expected to be employed and meeting RET participation with additional activities to improve self-sufficiency status.

Section: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
PROGRAMS

Subject: Refugee Employment and Training

**LIMITATION  
ON ACTIVITIES**

Services or employment plans and activities must be modified to reflect changed services or employment conditions. Services and employment must be related to capabilities. **Accommodations must be made as appropriate.**

When an RCA participant requests accommodations a written statement from a qualified medical professional must be obtained.

**RET  
REQUIREMENTS**

Mandatory RET participants receiving RCA must comply with the following activities as a condition of eligibility:

1. Register with the appropriate refugee employment agency in their area within 30 days of application;
2. Go to job interviews as arranged by RET provider;
3. Accept at any time from any source an offer of appropriate employment;
4. The participant may not, without good cause, voluntarily quit employment; and
5. Comply fully with all employability plan activities as negotiated with RET Case Manager.

**SUPPORTIVE  
SERVICES**

The following can be provided via a vendor payment as needed

1. Limited transportation assistance, when necessary to allow the refugee to participate in an employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment;
2. Limited transportation when necessary for participation in a service other than employability services; and
3. Translation and interpreter services, when necessary to allow the refugee to participate in an employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment.

To request a supportive service vendor payment, an email request must be sent to the State Refugee Coordinator in Helena who will request payment from fiscal. Copies of the email request and documents verifying the need for the supportive service request (invoice and receipts) must be retained in the case file.

Section: REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT  
PROGRAMS

Subject: Refugee Employment and Training

**NOTE:** Day care for children, even when necessary for participation in an employability service or for the acceptance or retention of employment is not an allowable expenditure. Refugees should be referred to either the TANF program or to the local resource and referral agency for non-TANF funded child care assistance.

## **FAILURE TO COMPLY**

**MANDATORY PARTICIPANT:** If the individual is receiving RCA as a mandatory participant and fails or refuses, without good cause, to meet the RET Employability Plan, or has voluntarily quit a job, assistance for the individual terminates. The RET case manager must immediately notify the county office (OPA) of the participant's failure to comply so a sanction can be imposed.

**VOLUNTARY PARTICIPANT:** If the individual is a voluntary participant and fails or refuses to participate, the RET case manager should evaluate possible barriers to participation and encourage the refugee to continue reporting employment status to the RET office on a regular. The individual's cash assistance is not affected. All actions must be documented in TEAMS case notes.

## **FEDERAL REPORTING**

Federal reporting requires tracking of refugee employment progress to the best of each State's ability for the 60 month time limit regardless of if they are open to public assistance. The State Refugee Coordinator will utilize TEAMS and CHIMES case notes, trimester reports from the RET, RCM and RIA providers as well as contacts within other contractors or vendors to complete the reporting requirements. Refugees should be assured that details are not given to the federal entity and should be encouraged to remain in contact with the local RET provider even after their goals of self-sufficiency are attained. This will ensure potential job loss issues can be addressed before they are a problem and will provide support for job advancement.

It is important for RET providers to enter case notes on TEAMS or CHIMES even after all public assistance involvements are closed.

It is also very important OPA offices provide a copy of each HCS-801 (Refugee Resource Referral) form to the State Refugee Coordinator regardless of what referrals are given or eligibility for public assistance.

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